The Holy Spirit Of The Past, Present, & Future

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday January 6th, 2019

Text: James 1:18-25

## Intro

1. Many are familiar with *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, written in 1843
   1. Miserly man is visited by three spirits:
      1. Ghost of Christmas Past: Showed him his past and the decisions & mistakes that shaped him – caused pangs of regret.
      2. Ghost of Christmas Present: Showed him his present, the misery of people who were close to him that he ignored – caused guilt.
      3. Ghost of Christmas Future: Showed him a miserly man who died and nobody missed or cared; a possible future if present unchanged – Frightened him.
   2. Miserly man changes ways so completely he is barely recognized by friends & family.
2. Story is not even 200 years old and has been told and retold in books and movies, taught in universities in literature classes, even told for children, and every retelling gets the moral of the story:
   1. Our past cannot be changed, but the lessons of the past can be learned to shape our present, and our present paves the road to our future.
   2. It is a story of redemption, but a fictional story – one that even scholars and atheists get the message!
3. The word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is thousands of years old, and the message of redemption in the gospel of Jesus is 2,000 years old and yet so many people miss its point!
   1. It shows us not just our past but the past of others; their mistakes and strengths.
   2. It shows us how we are to learn from the past to live in our present.
   3. It shows us the two possible futures that await based on how we live our present!
4. As we look to the New Year let us recognize the Holy Spirit reveals our past, & is our guide to the present & future!

#### Past

* 1. God has revealed the past of others for our benefit & example:
     1. Gal. 3:24-26: The Law (of Moses) is a tutor to bring men to Christ.
     2. Rom. 15:4-6: “Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction.”
     3. I Cor. 10:5-12: Christians are to learn from Israel’s past: not to repeat her mistakes.
  2. God reveals our past:
     1. I Cor. 6:9-11: This passage reminds the Corinthian church of their past, present, and future.
        1. Past life: Walked in all manner of sin.
        2. Present: Washed, sanctified, and justified in Christ.
        3. Future: Former sins would disqualify one’s entrance to heaven.
     2. Eph. 2:11-13: Their former way of life (2:3: “children of wrath”) excluded them from God but Christ’s blood brought them near to Him.
     3. II Pet. 2:20-22: The message to all saints is:
        1. Learn from the sins of the past and do not desire them.
        2. If one turns back to former way of life, they are worse off than the first because they know better, and know what they have given up.
     4. Rom. 6:6: Our “old self” ought to remain dead (crucified)!
  3. The past will shape our present; we need to learn the right lessons from the past!

#### Present

* 1. God revealed the present we are to live in based on lessons of the past:
     1. Rom. 6:1-2: Those who have obeyed the gospel must not continue in sin.
     2. Eph. 4:17-24: We are to put away old self (past sins) and put on new self (obedient child of God).
  2. God reveals the present way of life for His children to be pleasing to Him:
     1. Gal. 5:22-25: Walk in the present according to the “Fruit of the Spirit!” To “walk in the Spirit” requires us to crucify our flesh with its passions & desires!
        1. Past: “Deeds of the flesh” – Gal. 5:19-21
     2. Rom. 6:6 (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9): Our “old self” is to be crucified, “laid aside.”
     3. Eph. 5:1-4, 7-10: We are to imitate God – and expose the deeds of darkness (5:11-12) – Walk in the light, not in the darkness (past life)!
     4. Titus 2:11-14: We are to “live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” looking ahead to the future when Christ comes again!
        1. *II Pet. 3:10-12:* Knowing the future, our present should reflect our knowledge: holy conduct & godliness!
  3. Our present paves the road for the future so we must make sure we take the right road!

#### Future

* 1. Broad Road: leads to Hell
     1. Mt. 7:13-14: Two roads: Broad & Narrow
     2. Eph. 5:3-6: Those who live immorally (unbeliever or fallen believer) will have no inheritance with Christ but will suffer the wrath of God!
     3. II Thess. 1:7-9: Those who do not know God or do not obey the gospel will be separated from God for eternity.
     4. Rev. 20:11-15: Those who are not named in the Book of Life will suffer the 2nd death: eternal torment in lake of burning fire (Rev. 21:8).
     5. Mt. 25:41, 46: To the wicked on His left Jesus will condemn to Hell (25:46: “eternal punishment”)
     6. *Mk. 9:43-48:* Describes Hell as a place of such torment, “Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”
  2. Narrow road: leads to Heaven
     1. *Mt. 7:13-14:* Two roads: Broad & Narrow
     2. I Pet. 1:1-5: In Christ we have an inheritance reserved for us in Heaven.
        1. Rom. 8:16-17: As saints and children of God, we are fellow heirs with Christ (Who lives in Heaven – Col. 3:1-3).
     3. Rev. 2:10; 3:21: Overcoming our present (trials & tribulations) will ensure our future with Christ in His glory (James 1:2-4, 12).
     4. Rev. 21:3-7: “He who overcomes” will inherit the home of God.
        1. Contrast that with *Eph. 5:3-6:* No immoral person has inheritance with Christ! (Wrath of God falls on the sons of disobedience!)
     5. Mt. 25:34, 46: To the righteous on His right He will invite into His home (Rom. 5:8-9: Saved from the wrath of God!)
  3. Two futures await: Eternal Punishment & Eternal Life! *(Mt. 25:46)*

## Conclusion

1. Js. 1:18-25: The Scriptures are a mirror that provide a look at our past, present and future:
   1. It provides insight into our past (Vs. 21: filthiness, wickedness), and instruction for our present (Vs. 21: humbly receive the word of God) so we can be blessed in the future (Vs. 21, 25: the word will save our souls, being a doer of the word blesses one in what he does)!
   2. Just as we look into a mirror to see what we physically look like, we look into the Scriptures to see what we spiritually look like.
   3. Js. 1:22-25: If we don’t like what we see, we need to change it not just forget about it.
   4. We need to be doers of the word not just be hearers of the word.
2. When confronted with the future, one can change life completely to conform to God’s pattern!
3. Learn from the past to live righteously in the present to enjoy an eternal future with the Lord!
4. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent of your sins and be baptized!
5. If a Christian in error, remember from what you escaped, repent and be renewed!
6. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!